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TO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD IMMEDIATE 0122
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3636
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHMFIUU/COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA IMMEDIATE

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SUBJECT: DEFMIN NUKAGA LETTER TO SECDEF ON IRAQ DEPLOYMENT

¶1. (U) Embassy has received a letter from Defense Minister Nukaga to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld dated June 22 regarding the changes to Japan's deployment of Self-Defense Forces in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (full text in para 2; original to follow via pouch).

¶2. (U) The letter, received from JDA Operations Bureau contacts on June 23, expresses gratitude for U.S. assistance during the Ground Self-Defense Forces' deployment to Al Muthanna province, and pledges a continued role for the Self-Defense Forces in providing airlift for coalition forces and the United Nations, and support for counter-terrorism operations in the Indian Ocean.

¶3. (U) Begin letter text (labeled "provisional translation"):

The Honorable Donald Henry Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense

SIPDIS
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld,

As I understand your schedule is very tight, I hope you do not object that I chose to write to you instead of giving you a call personally.

Following the announcement of the transfer of authority in Al Muthanna Province in Iraq, the Japanese Government announced on June 20 that it will redeploy the Ground Self-Defense Force Reconstruction Group from the province.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the U.S. forces' various assistance to our forces, which has been afforded from the predeployment phase to the present.

As I mentioned at our last meeting in Singapore as well as on other occasions, even after the Ground Self-Defense Force has redeployed to Japan, Japan will continue to dispatch liaison officers to the multinational forces headquarters in Baghdad and continue to provide airlifts by the Air Self-Defense Force to assist the multinational forces and the United Nations, adding Baghdad and Erbil to the cities to which airlifts will be provided.

The Self-Defense Forces will continue to engage in activities to support the reconstruction of Iraq and activities in the Indian Ocean for the fight against terrorism, thereby taking an active role to achieve our common goals in the international community.

I hope we can continue to work closely together in order to further strengthen our cooperative relationship under the U.S.-Japan alliance.

Sincerely,

// s //

Fukushiro Nukaga
Minister of State for Defense
Director-General of Defense Agency

End text.
SCHIEFFER